As this academic year comes to a close, it’s the perfect time to reflect on the college’s accomplishments in 2001-2002 and to share our achievements with you.

Since you last heard from us in the inaugural edition of this newsletter in 2001, we’ve been working hard to provide new opportunities for everyone affiliated with the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences — our faculty, staff, alumni, and, most important, our students. Offering them hands-on experience, from participating in undergraduate research or extension internships to studying abroad, continues to be one of our primary goals.

Five seniors and one graduate student in the college’s agricultural communication program recently gained practical reporting experience when they wrote stories for *CALS Connection*. Peruse Keyatta Shade’s article, which focuses on undergraduate internships, then learn about the important roles student organizations play in the college in a story by Steven Lands. Read on as Kelli Dunn describes the challenges of recruiting for a college as diverse as ours, and Rebecca Ambrose sheds light on the responsibilities and leadership opportunities of the CALS Ambassadors program. Finally, Emily Eubanks covers some events sponsored by the college, including its premier alumni event, Tailgator, and Aimee Huskey reports on the growth of the IFAS Graduate Research Symposium.

The students benefited from the opportunity, and we in turn have the chance to enjoy their fresh perspectives.

Faculty members continue to support these and other hands-on learning activities. In this issue, Mickie Swisher, the college’s globalization coordinator, documents her experience leading a group of students on an international study tour in Costa Rica. Katie Sieving, the honors coordinator for the college, discusses the strength and growth of the upper division honors program.

Our faculty are the key to providing the excellent education we offer. Recognition by the United States Department of Agriculture, the University of Florida and Blue Key attests to the high quality of teaching and advising found in our college.

Our students also continue to amaze us. In the past year, they increasingly participated in and conducted leadership programs here at the University of Florida and across the country. Their recognitions, detailed throughout this publication, reflect a wide range of achievements.

One of the most important and visible measures of success for the college is the accomplishments of our graduates. Three alumni featured in this issue took three different paths to success. Mortimer H. Neufville is executive vice president of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. Betsy Gardner owns The Plant Shoppe at Greenery Square in Gainesville, while Guillermo Palacios directs the Agricultural School of El Hogar in Honduras.

Many alumni have responded to our request for updated information. We encourage all alumni to connect with us by completing the form on page 5.

As you read the second edition of *CALS Connection*, we believe you will share our sense of pride in the college and in the strength of our students, alumni, faculty and staff.
Message From The Dean

The 2001-2002 academic year has been another exceptionally productive year for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. This year we had 86Z graduate students, a record number for CALS. Undergraduate enrollment was approximately 3,000 students. Nationally, CALS ranks seventh at the undergraduate level and fifth at the graduate level in student body size. Nationally, we produced the fifth largest number of bachelor's degrees, fourth largest number of master's degrees, and fifth largest number of doctoral degrees. Our faculty increased graduate student credit hours taught by almost 10 percent and undergraduate student credit hours taught by more than 8 percent.

A major strength of CALS is the highly productive and dedicated faculty and staff who are committed to excellence in teaching and advising, undergraduate and graduate education, student diversity, and enhancing the quality of the educational experiences for students in CALS. Our students continually tell me about the high regard they have for our faculty and staff. The students praise our teaching and advising, as well as the rigorous and relevant curricula. They complement faculty and staff for their commitment to helping them make the transition from the university to career fields or continuing their education.

Our students are in high demand by business and industry, academia and government. Many become successful entrepreneurs. I am pleased to report our students are entering career fields well prepared to meet the demands of today's increasingly complex job market and changing societal needs. We have a stellar record placing CALS students into graduate and professional school. These are among the most meaningful measures of success for our programs.

The University of Florida will undergo Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation in 2003. One of the major accrediting activities will center on student and faculty globalization. Jim Jones, distinguished professor of agricultural and biological engineering, is leading a task force to provide a roadmap to more fully involve our students and faculty in international activities that help us better understand reactions, consequences and impact locally and globally. Making globalization a focus of the accreditation process is a clear demonstration that it is a University priority. We are encouraging our undergraduates to participate in at least two activities that include study abroad, internships, research with faculty, volunteer service and leadership development. CALS is participating fully in this inclusive initiative.

A presidential task force on the future of the university is currently studying ways to improve and restructure the University of Florida. We welcome this examination and believe we will emerge a stronger college and university. As these winds of change blow, CALS remains fully engaged and committed to vigorously pursuing our agenda of preparing society-ready graduates. The college is focused intently on further developing truly excellent educational programs and ever greater leadership and innovation in the field. I look forward to working with each of you to advance these objectives.

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Enrollment Fall 2001

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Degrees Granted in 2001

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<td>Foreign Nationals</td>
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CA LS Facts:

CALS graduates accounted for more than 18 percent of the students enrolling in UF’s veterinary medicine, medicine, dentistry and physician assistant programs in fall 2001.

A new partnership between the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and an agricultural communication course has provided students with real-world experience.

Many of the articles in this edition of CALS Connection were written by students in AEE 4056: Advanced Agricultural Communication Writing. In the fall course, students wrote feature stories for the CALS newsletter and developed media kits, which included news releases, brochures, feature stories and news stories for nonprofit organizations and county fairs. The students, all agricultural communication majors, also submitted long feature stories to major agricultural magazines for publication.

The partnership with the CALS newsletter was a natural. It provided students with another outlet for their writing, and it helped CALS cover events and feature individual students and alumni that CALS might not otherwise have been able to.

Student contributors were Rebecca Ambrose, Kelli Dunn, Emily Eubanks, Steven Lands and Keyatta Shade. Ricky Telg, associate professor in the department of agricultural education and communication, teaches the course.
CALS Upper Division Honors Program Going Strong and Growing Daily

BY KATIE SIEVING

The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences realizes that the exceptional focus required to maintain academic excellence can often make it difficult to see the connection between a high G.P.A. and opportunity after graduation. Participation in the CALS upper division honors program during a student’s last two to three years as an undergraduate provides students with important links to their future.

CALS honors requirements are flexible, accommodating students’ demanding schedules while supporting their efforts to achieve. The nine credit hours of coursework for the program also fulfill requirements in a student’s major. The requirements do not add more work; they enrich their undergraduate experience in ways that help students discover strengths, intellectual passions and future goals, according to students.

CALS is the only college at UF with an organized upper division honors program. E. Jane Luzar, associate dean, notes that students who choose to join the CALS honors program are those who seek challenges. Those who are open to new ways of thinking, delving deeper into and beyond their required coursework and asking questions about where they are headed in life.

Faculty who make the honors program function in this way are among the best from UF and beyond. These faculty members are productive, creative people with extraordinary talent for mentoring young people who will shape our future, Luzar said.

The core course that all CALS honors students take is ALS 4921 Honors Colloquium. This course emphasizes critical thinking in the context of a topic selected by the faculty member who teaches the course, usually a topic that is in the faculty member’s area of expertise. That sparks the students’ interest and generates impassioned learning, notes Luzar.

In addition to the colloquium, many students are entering into an ‘honors contract’ with instructors of their regular upper division courses. Don Graetz, professor of soil and water science; Bobbi Langkamp-Henken, associate professor of food science; Gail Kauwell, associate professor of food science; Maurice Marshall, professor of food science; Steve Talcott, assistant professor of food science; Millie Ferrer, associate professor of family, youth, and community sciences; John Reynolds, professor of food resource and economics; Lisa House, associate professor of food and resource economics; Rebecca Baldwin, entomology, and Brian McNab, zoology, each have from one to five CALS honors students doing contract work this semester. These experiences deepen the students’ exposure to the course material.

Currently, 131 students with a GPA of 3.5 or higher are enrolled in the CALS upper division honors program; that’s approximately one-third of all eligible students in CALS.

Get In Where You Fit In

BY STEVEN LANDS

“Get in where you fit in” could be the motto for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences when it comes to student organizations. The college offers more than 50 organizations, the most offered by any college at the University of Florida. The organizations are the most offered by any college. Student organizations in the college are diverse, as well as numerous, including clubs in food and resource economics, equine sciences, agronomy and soils, and wildlife.

“CALS offers a club or organization for any aspect of agriculture, human resources, natural resources and the life sciences that students might be interested in,” said Rick Rudd, faculty advisor for the Agricultural Education and Communication Society (AECS).

With all of the opportunities for education in the college, it is no surprise the faculty of the college are so involved with students at the University of Florida, said AECS Vice President Erin Emery. “We do all kinds of things for CALS,” Emery said. “We do advertising for the college at the FFA conventions, and we do recruiting for the college.” The organizations are student-run and organized by elected officers.

“Student-run organizations are an important part of undergraduate studies,” Rudd said. “It gives them a chance to enhance professional skills and leadership development.”

All student organizations are proactive and committed to the academic improvement of their members and betterment in community service. Working with 4-H chapters and volunteering at Shands Hospital and the vet school are some of the activities these clubs offer students.

The wide range of organizations provides students with the opportunity to find a club that suits their interest. All the organizations have websites that can be accessed through the CALS home page. Each site offers a description of the club and gives information on how to join and whom to contact if interested. CALS student organizations travel to meetings and frequently host meetings. For example, the Gator Forestry Club attended the conclave at Texas A&M, and Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) hosted a regional leadership workshop this spring at the University of Florida.

cals.ufl.edu/Honors/CALSHonorsProg.htm
Global Gators: CALS Goes International

Students Gain Knowledge, World View In Russia

BY KEYATTA SHADE

When most University of Florida students leave their dorm rooms during the spring semester, one challenge they hardly expect to face is trekking through snow to get to their classes. But for UF students Noah Handley and Theresa Lynn Lagasse, snow was virtually an everyday occurrence as they took part in the Moscow State University Exchange Program in Moscow, Russia.

The program, connected with UF’s College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, is in its second year and proving to be beneficial to students and the university. “I got a lot of cultural experiences that opened my mind to other things,” Handley said, “not only in school, but in the business world as well.”

Lagasse, an agricultural education and communication senior, said the trip, more than anything, gave her a chance to get to know a different culture. “It gave me the cultural experience of getting to know the Russian people,” Lagasse said.

Both students dealt with a number of challenges when they first arrived. Neither spoke Russian, so a task as simple as navigating around town could be a chore in itself. “All the signs were, of course, not in English,” said Handley, a senior in agricultural operations management. “You had to learn very basic words for things like entrances and exits, and at least be able to recognize street names.”

Likewise, when students went into the local community, it was difficult for them to converse in the marketplace. They had to have a Russian student with them to translate any interactions that took place in the market. “By the term’s end, we could negotiate by ourselves, anywhere, with the little bit of Russian that we did have,” Lagasse said. Despite this, Lagasse said this wasn’t the most challenging part of the experience for her. “The most challenging part of this for me, personally, was being a 45-year-old student among 15 20 year olds,” Lagasse said.

While in Russia, the students also took university courses that lasted a month at a time and were taught by U.S. professors, who also took the trip to Moscow. “We spent as much as 12 hours a week in the classroom to cover a condensed course load in one month,” Lagasse said. Some of the courses students took included Russian, agricultural structures, agricultural environmental effects and agricultural communications. “We also produced a web-based newsletter bi-weekly to keep our friends, family and associates back home in America informed of what we were doing,” Lagasse said. She added that the students also took a seminar class, where they “went into the community investigating, studying and being guests of different agricultural enterprises in and around Moscow. We went to a tremendous greenhouse facility that covered about six square hectares of greenhouses.”

One of Handley’s fondest memories is of the time he spent on one of the local farms during a trip away from campus. “Land ownership is not a common right there,” Handley said. “These farmers have to deal with greater challenges than we do in the States.”

Penn State University, which runs the program, allows students from five universities to travel to Moscow and study agriculture. Nick Place, assistant professor of agricultural education and communication and facilitator of the program, said the program benefits the university as well. “By having these types of programs, it really helps us to become more of a global university,” Place said.

He said many employers are looking for students with international experiences. “These kinds of options and opportunities are helping us to meet that requirement,” Place said. As far as the students are concerned, Place observed the program “stretches them personally and professionally. It helps to remove the blinders. It helps them to look at things much differently after they participate in international programs such as this.” Students also have the opportunity of making lifelong contacts with students from the other four universities from the United States participating in the program. “Even more so, they make some really good friends and contacts with the students from Moscow State University,” Place said.

Two more CALS students are participating in the spring 2003 program. One of those students, UF junior Josh Brown, said the opportunity to learn about another culture fueled his reasons for going. “One thing I’ve learned in my intercultural communications class is how to create a better world view,” Brown said. “Hopefully, by being put into a different kind of culture, it’s going to give me a new light on how to view other cultures.”

Outstanding International Student Awards

CALS students are recognized with UF Outstanding International Student Awards, April 25, 2002. From left to right: Waldie Fernandez, Ph.D. student, food and resource economics, Brazil; Marcele Machiote, Ph.D. student, wildlife ecology and conservation, Argentina; Cynthia Khoo, Ph.D. student, entomology and nematology, Philippines; Roger Darros-Barrosa, Ph.D. student, food science and human nutrition, Brazil; Elo Jovovich, Ph.D. student, horticultural science, Argentina.

Spring Break Study Group Tours Costa Rica

BY MICKIE SWISHER

Mickie Swisher, student globalization coordinator for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and 11 students participated in the college’s 2002 spring break study tour in Costa Rica. This group examined approaches to development that have been successful in the host nation. Despite the obvious differences between Florida and Costa Rica, the state and small Central American nation have much in common. Tourism and agriculture are key economic activities for both. Like Florida, Costa Rica depends greatly on international migrant labor for agriculture. Both Florida and Costa Rica are destinations for many immigrants. The group wanted to learn about the problems that Costa Rica has faced and the lessons they have learned about how to achieve sustainable agricultural and tourism development.

The group visited several sites. At the La Selva Biological Research Station, owned and operated by the Organization for Tropical Studies, they learned that conservation has a long history in Costa Rica. The group visited a local Dole Corporation banana plantation and found that Dole is taking steps to enhance the sustainability and reduce the environmental impacts of producing bananas.

A visit to a local health facility showed the group the problems that occur when international laborers, generally of poorer health and lower educational status than Costa Ricans, become a large part of the population in an area.

The next site they visited, a small village called Zeta Trece, is a classic example of locally based ecotourism. Motivated by the failure of agriculture to provide adequate income, women in this town have started their own hotel, restaurant, and butterfly and medicinal herb farm. Tourism is a natural form to the area since the beautiful and active Arenal Volcano is only a few kilometers away. The group visited Los Termales del Bosque, a private farm in the area that has combined ecotourism and cattle production. The group’s “research” there included spending time in the hot springs fueled by the volcano, horseback riding and a canopy tour where most of them strapped themselves into a harness to swing through the top of the rain forest.

The group then returned to San Jose, Costa Rica’s capital, and made additional day trips. They visited local vegetable and coffee farms in the highlands, took a day to go to the beach and spent the last day visiting Poas Volcano, another active volcano and Costa Rica’s oldest and most visited national park.
A Lumina Acheive Success

Mortimer H. Neufville

Mortimer H. Neufville, who received his bachelor’s degree from Tuskegee University and his master’s and doctoral degrees in animal sciences from the University of Florida, was honored December 15, 2001, with UF’s Distinguished Alumnus award for his many contributions to the agricultural sciences. Neufville has distinguished himself internationally and among his peers as a renowned scientist, outstanding educator and visionary leader.

Neufville currently serves as executive vice president of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC). NASULGC, the nation’s oldest higher education association comprised of public universities, land-grant institutions and many of the nation’s public university systems, has been at the forefront of national education leadership for more than a century. As second-in-command at NASULGC, Neufville plays a prominent and effective role in articulating and coordinating the activities of land-grant and affiliate institutions in the areas of food, agriculture, natural resources, environmental affairs, human sciences, forestry and international affairs.

Throughout his career, Neufville has earned an international reputation for his dedication to quality education, research and service. Neufville has provided leadership for numerous initiatives to help institutions garner funding, respectability and recognition. As an international leader in animal science, Neufville has provided guidance and counsel to numerous prestigious organizations such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Education Council, the President’s Administrative Council and the National Higher Education Committee of the Joint Council of Food and Agriculture.

Guillermo Palacios

Guillermo Palacios is a man with a vision and a mission in the Talanga Valley of Honduras, where he directs the Agricultural School of El Hogar. The 1983 University of Florida College of Agricultural and Life Sciences graduate leads a faculty that teaches modern agricultural techniques to 40 of the poorest elementary and middle school age boys in a desperately poor Central American nation.

A program of the Episcopal Diocese of Honduras, the school is one of three educational institutions that form Proyectos El Hogar (El Hogar Projects), headquartered in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa.

The institution Palacios directs is located on a 270-acre farm where boys learn up-to-date farming methods that are appropriate for the Honduran economy and environment. The boys also complete what would be the freshman year in high school in America.

Reflecting the economic conditions of Honduras, farms are much smaller than in North America. Plots of four and five acres are seen as prosperous. Therefore, it’s crucial to teach young boys how to make the most of small parcels of land.

Palacios’ school got its start in 1991 when 15 boys and three staff members moved to Talanga with their cows, pigs and goats. They lived in rented quarters as they built their school from scratch. The Reverend Leo Frade, then bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Honduras, dedicated the facility in 1993.

Palacios was there from the start, having joined the El Hogar staff in 1989 as a teacher at an agricultural school jointly run with the Roman Catholic church. However, that school was located on very poor, dry land nearly 100 miles from El Hogar’s headquarters.

“The move to Talanga, was very welcome, all of our buildings were constructed without destroying a single tree, and we try our best to share that environmental commitment with students” Palacios said.

At both the agricultural school and the technical institute, academic studies continue alongside vocational education. The academic side of things must never be lost, according to Lazar Ramon Juarez, who heads the staff of El Hogar Projects.

While El Hogar began in 1979 as a school for “street boys,” the staff now tries to get to the country’s poorest children before they are abandoned. Parents who have absolutely nothing to offer their children at home see El Hogar as the only chance their sons will have to achieve success.
Recruiting Makes Strides With Gator Encounter

What do a medical doctor, golf course superintendent, forester, social worker and business analyst have in common? Prospective students and their families, teachers and advisors ascended on the Florida Gymnasium April 6 to learn the answer to that question at Gator Encounter 2002. More than 400 participants learned that professionals of all types found their paths to success through the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

Gator Encounter, the college’s annual open house, allowed participants to explore programs offered by CALS through 40 interactive displays and conversations with faculty, staff and students from departments and student organizations.

Students like Crystal Wilkerson, a high school student from Orange Park, enjoyed the opportunity to learn about CALS’ top-notch programs. “I finally have some direction and college isn’t something I am dreading anymore,” Wilkerson said. Like Wilkerson, many participants enjoyed learning about CALS through the interactive displays that included hands-on activities involving braiding heather plants, taking quizzes about the environment, learning about sturgeon and handling alligators.

Emily Sperling, CALS director of student recruitment and retention, felt the event was a great success because of the efforts of the departments and the quality of their activities. “Participants came to the event with their curiosity in tow,” she said. “Our departments did a fantastic job of satisfying their curiosity and educating them about exciting academic and career opportunities in agriculture and natural resources.”
The CALS Ambassadors' objective is to create interest in and comprehension of the diverse programs, majors and opportunities in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Recruitment, alumni relations, special events and leadership development are ways that the ambassadors work toward this objective, according to CALS Ambassador program coordinator Paul Willis.

In 1989 a small group of students in CALS were brought together to form the first ambassador team, called the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Ambassadors. Presently the team has 33 members who were chosen through a rigorous application and interview process. The process, which consists of an application and then later, a two-part interview if the applicant is chosen, determines how well the student can represent the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

A student desiring to be an ambassador must meet the minimum academic standards and be willing to fulfill the responsibilities of the time commitment to the program, Willis said. “Last year we had roughly 50 applicants,” Willis said. “About 20 of them were selected to be a part of this year’s team.”

Sarah Joe Cannon was one of the ambassadors chosen. A junior majoring in agricultural communication, Cannon first wanted to become an ambassador when she heard about their excellent reputation around campus. “The CALS Ambassadors are a group that I am proud to be a part of,” Cannon said. “We develop camaraderie within the group and focus on developing our leadership skills.

The ambassadors commit to a one-hour weekly meeting and participation in an average of four to six hours a month for events,” Willis said. The CALS Ambassadors host alumni events such as TailGator, recruiting programs like Gator Encounter, and leadership development conferences such as the Southern Regional Ambassador Conference, which was organized entirely by the UF CALS Ambassador team in April. Cannon participates in an average of six events per semester with the ambassadors. “What you get out of being an ambassador depends entirely on what you put into it,” Cannon said.

In addition to hosting most CALS events, the ambassadors speak to many groups, including students at high schools or community colleges to let them know how much CALS has to offer,” Willis said. The ambassadors will be a part of two new events, fundraising for the college and working on a public relations campaign, Food for Thought.

“The ambassadors will speak to civic organizations throughout the state about food and natural resources and how IFAS and the college support that,” Willis said. The ambassadors have also spent time working with lobbyists in the state legislature and writing postcards to prospective students.
Faculty Members Earn Awards, Honors

William W. Thatcher, professor of animal sciences, IFAS, is one of five University of Florida recipients of a “2002 Doctoral Dissertation Advisor Mentoring Award” presented by the University of Florida’s Graduate School. Thatcher is recognized for his outstanding contributions as a doctoral dissertation advisor and mentor. He currently mentors four doctoral students and one master’s student. To date, he has trained 16 master students, 23 doctoral students and eight post-doctoral associates. Many of his students have received national professional society awards, as well as outstanding thesis awards at the University of Florida. Previously, Thatcher was the recipient of the L.E. Casida Awards for Excellence in Graduate Training from the American Society of Animal Science.

Mike Olexa, professor of food and resource economics, received the Food and Agriculture Sciences Excellence in College and University Teaching Award in Washington, D.C. November 11, 2001. The award, sponsored by the USDA and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), is one of two honors given each year at the annual meeting of NASULGC. It includes a $5,000 stipend to be used by the recipient for improving teaching at his or her university.

Florida Blue Key Leadership Honorary seeks to recognize individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service and dedication to the university. Jim Nation and Mike Olexa, CALS faculty members, were recognized by Blue Key as distinguished faculty in 2001. They were selected for their distinguished records of excellent teaching and commitment to students; the recognition of their abilities, talents and skills by their peers; records of scholarly achievement through publication; a sensitivity to and concern for the development of students; and an overall commitment to UF.

Faculty Honored at the 2001 Convocation with Faculty Teaching and Advising Awards

Four CALS faculty members were recognized for excellence in teaching and advising at the 2001 Annual CALS Scholarship and Leadership Convocation. Jim Kimbrough, professor of plant pathology, and Al Wysocki, assistant professor of food and resource economics, were recognized for their contributions to undergraduate education in CALS. George Fitzpatrick, professor of environmental horticulture, was selected as Undergraduate Advisor of the Year for his contributions to advising at the CALS off-campus programs at Homestead and Ft. Lauderdale. The award for Graduate Teacher/Advisor of the Year in CALS was awarded to William Thatcher, professor of animal sciences.
Students Recognized for Outstanding Achievement

**Jack L. Fry Teaching Award**

Susan Moyer has been a teaching assistant for HUN 5246 (Current Issues in Dietary Supplements) and HUN 2201 (Fundamentals of Nutrition). In addition to being a teaching assistant, she has managed to maintain a 4.0 GPA in her graduate studies.

Moyer’s teaching responsibilities include teaching 400-level courses in the College of Dentistry. She was also involved in the design and development of a course in nutrition, design of PowerPoint presentations, and Internet-based learning material. She pursued an opportunity for additional teaching experience at the UF College of Dentistry and designed and taught a new graduate level course DEN 5230, Nutrition and Oral Health.

**Dean’s Leadership Award**

Natalie Lamneck is majoring in animal science with a specialization in poultry science in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. She will be attending vet school in the fall. Lamneck has been a CALS Ambassador since fall 1999.

Lamneck is past president of the Block and Bridge Club and is involved in the Poultry Science Club, Alpha Zeta, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and Golden Key Honor Society. She is a former member of 4-H and a recipient of the American FFA Degree. Lamneck has been the recipient of several scholastic awards including the Doyle Conner Scholarship and the University of Florida Presidential Recognition Award.

**E.T. York, Jr Award of Merit**

Erin Eckhardt is majoring in environmental horticulture with minors in agricultural communication and anthropology. Eckhardt is a sister of Sigma Phi Alpha, a member of the Golden Key National Honor Society, and Alpha Delta Pi sorority. Eckhardt joined Alpha Delta Pi to help students find their way through the college experience. She was also runner-up for Miss University of Florida for 2001.

Eckhardt is a CALS Ambassador and would like to educate individuals about the agriculture industry and promote the opportunities of higher education. She developed and coordinated a leadership seminar for the State FFA Conference in 2001, which will now be part of the annual State FFA meeting. Testimony to her academic abilities is the number of scholarships that Erin has received.

**J. Wayne Reitz Medal of Excellence**

Kelly Marie Clayton is majoring in food science and human nutrition with a specialization in dietetics. She is a member of Alpha Zeta, Golden Key Honor Society and the National Honor Society of Collegiate Scholars. After graduation, she plans to pursue a career in medicine. With that goal in mind, she has done volunteer work in several medical facilities, including the Diabetes Clinic, the Pediatric Endocrine Clinics, the Emergency Room and the Operating Room at Shands Hospital in Gainesville.

Clayton has been on the CALS Dean’s List and has received the Anderson Scholar Certificate of Highest Distinction. She also participates in the CALS upper division honors program.

**Larry J. Connor Medal of Excellence**

Aisha Cuadras is majoring in food science and human nutrition with a specialty in dietetics. She is a member of the honors program in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, as well as Golden Key National Honor Society.

As a University Scholar, Cuadras is conducting a laboratory research study in which she is responsible for analyzing blood samples to quantitate folate concentrations. Her work, usually carried out by graduate students, illustrates her ability to excel in a research environment. Her research findings will be published as a journal article.

**FFA Southern Region Vice President**

Barrett Keene is majoring in agricultural education with minors in agricultural communications and agricultural law. Keene served as the 1999-2000 State FFA President. His involvement on campus has included Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity, the Agricultural Education and Communication Society, and Student Senate. Keene plans to pursue a career in agriculture education.

He also serves as the FFA southern region vice president.

**Miss University of Florida**

In addition to being named Miss University of Florida, Tiffany LaCross is a pre-med senior majoring in food science and human nutrition (FSHN). This summer, LaCross completed an internship with the FSHN department researching the effects of a particular genetic mutation on folic acid metabolism in young women.

She is currently the new member coordinator for Alpha Delta Pi sorority, associate coordinator of divisions for Florida Blue Key, associate coordinator of the Emerging Conference and the homecoming historian. She is a member of Florida Blue Key, Savan UF and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars.

Since coming to UF, LaCross has served as the director of the Miss University of Florida and Miss Florida Gator Scholarship Pageant, the Homecoming 2000 Administrative Assistant, service assistant director and Rho Chi for the Panhellenic Council, member of the university curriculum committee, a director for the Emerging Leaders Conference, 150th anniversary chairman for Alpha Delta Pi and a student senator.

LaCross enjoys volunteering with the Ronald McDonald House, Girl’s Club, March of Dimes and in various departments of Shands Hospital. She is a Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholar and a Kiwanis Scholar, and was recently named to Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges. Next year LaCross hopes to attend medical school.

**Outstanding Female Leader**

Jenny Lee Hayes is majoring in environmental horticulture, and is recognized for her tireless commitment to improving the quality and safety of her collegiate community.

Upon graduation Hayes will be recognized by the university as one of the seven Outstanding Leadership Award recipients.

Hayes’ vision and determination ensured her success in several campus organizations. In Student Government she served as senator, director of the Health Cabinet, and later as chief of staff. She was appointed the Panhellenic Council’s Alcohol Education assistant director, helped create Homecoming’s Soulfest and served in several leadership positions in her sorority, Alpha Delta Pi. She was appointed to the Campus HIV Education and Policy Committee, Student Health Advisory Board, and served as chair of the Health Service Fee Committee. Through service to these committees, Hayes helped design the “Sloppy Gator” anti-drinking campaign and “Necessities for Living,” a campaign to educate the Gainesville community about the HIV virus.

She has professional experience with IPAS’ Governmental Affairs Office and the U.S. House of Representatives, where she concentrated on agricultural legislation. She has volunteered for the Students with Disabilities Office, Mentor/Mentee Program, Ronald McDonald House, the Gainesville City Tree Pruning project, and participated in Dance Marathon.

Hayes was also runner-up for Miss University of Florida for 2001.
Tailgator Changes for the New Century

By EMILY EUBANKS

TailGator sported a new look and location for 2001. To keep up with the times, the fifth annual College of Agricultural and Life Sciences TailGator had a few changes. On Saturday, September 29, 2001 more than 1,200 alumni, faculty and students attended TailGator before the University of Florida-Mississippi State football game. “TailGator provides an opportunity for alumni and friends to return to campus for a great time of fun and fellowship while being able to visit departmental displays and visit with current faculty, staff and students,” said CALS Alumni and Friends Director Paul Willis.

TailGator moved to the Stephen C. O’Connell Center from the J. Wayne Reitz Union lawns this year. CALS Associate Dean E. Jane Luzar said TailGator participants liked the move since it was so much cooler indoors. Luzar also said alumni thought the displays were easier to see this year than in the past. “The use of a new facility shows the evolution of TailGator over the past several years,” Luzar said. CALS Alumni and Friends President Kevin Huesman also thought the O’Connell Center was the best place to have TailGator.

In the past, TailGator has been exclusively for CALS alumni. Students have had a separate barbecue. This year, the two events were combined to provide more interaction among students, faculty and alumni. “We thought having the students networking with the alumni and friends would be fun for the alumni and may open new doors for the students,” Willis said.

Luzar said TailGator provided alumni with exposure to new majors and clubs. It also linked the generations between alumni and students. “Having the chance to interact and network with alumni was a great opportunity for me,” said CALS ambassador Marshall Baker. “With this being my first TailGator, I was surprised to see how many people attended and how the alumni were really interested in me.”

CALS Dean Jimmy Cheek was impressed with how many people attended this year. When TailGator began five years ago, it was held behind McCarty Hall, with only about 600 people attending, he said. “TailGator was a tremendous success and being able to fill the O’Connell Center went far above our expectations,” Cheek said. “Expanding the event from 600 people to 1,200 people is phenomenal.”

Also new this year was a live auction. Items auctioned off included a football signed by UF football coach Steve Spurrier, a signed Billy Donovan basketball, a golf outing with Cheek and Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Vice President Mike Martin, a weekend beach trip and two tickets to the Florida-Florida State football game. The auction brought in $1,400 and proceeds from the auction benefited scholarships for CALS students. “For our first attempt, we were pleased with the auction,” Willis said.

Willis said the O’Connell Center will be the venue for TailGator for the immediate future. “Tentative plans for next year are already being made and are exciting,” Willis said. “While we aren’t prepared to disclose details, these plans call for some changes that should enhance TailGator and get even more people involved.”

The second annual Teaching Enhancement Symposium was held August 16, 2001 at the UF Hotel and Conference Center in Gainesville. The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences continued its commitment to teaching excellence and improvement by offering sessions on many areas of interest to CALS faculty.

Sessions included topics such as “Teaching Students to Reason: Critical Thinking Within the Discipline” and “Education in a Multi-cultural Environment.” All who attended appreciated the variety and depth of the sessions as they discovered new tools and ideas to enhance their teaching and student relations.

This annual event helps CALS to continue to realize its goals and commitment to excellence in teaching.

CALS Career Day is a Success

The College of Agricultural and Life Sciences held its annual Agriculture and Natural Resources Career Day February 13, 2002. The career fair gives employers the opportunity to showcase their products and services. Employers personally met with approximately 500 students in several fields including the sciences, economics, education, business, engineering, communication, natural resources and production.

Gabriele Klausen, president of the Indian River Agriculture Club, said “CALS Career Day provided me with an excellent opportunity to interact with industry representatives and initiate my job search. Whether you are planning to graduate in the near future or just get some ideas about future prospects, Career Day is a great investment.”

JobHog.net was a special sponsor for the 2002 CALS Career Day. JobHog.net posts jobs for a variety of companies with the agriculture and natural science industries.
Research Symposium Highlights Graduate Student Research

By Aimee Huskey

The second annual IFAS graduate research symposium was a great way to highlight research, according to the CALS Associate Dean E. Jane Luzar. “The symposium allows two students from each department to present their research to students and professors from other departments, while other students create posters detailing their research,” Luzar said. “Next year we would like to expand the poster section and have more students involved.”

Paul Willis, student and alumni services director, said the symposium enables graduate students to learn how to present their research to other people. “The symposium allows us to showcase graduate students’ research to faculty and other students, and give graduate students an opportunity to learn what peers are doing,” he said.

Observing other students’ presentations exposes graduate students to some of the skills needed to present their research outside of their discipline, said Jim Dyer agricultural education and communications assistant professor. “I definitely would want my students to present it’s a forum for their research.”

Graduate students are able to see how others present and communicate to the public and these skills are important for future presentations, said food science and human nutrition doctoral student Amy Mackey. “The symposium is a great way to prepare yourself for national meetings outside of the university,” she said. Mackey presented work from her doctoral project and said the symposium offers exposure to let everyone see what her department is doing.

“We saw today that a lot of technology is cross-disciplinary,” Mackey said. The symposium also creates new ideas and prospects for joint research projects, said doctoral student Waldir Fernandes. He attended Aaron Hert’s presentation about a bacterium that adversely affects tomato plants and is related to bacterium that causes citrus canker. Fernandes said he wondered if joint research had been done. “Citrus canker is a disease of high impact in both Florida and Sao Paulo, Brazil, the two major citrus producing regions of the world,” he said. Fernandes is a citizen of Brazil and has been working with citrus since 1987. Hert and Fernandes exchanged e-mail addresses so Hert could get in touch with Brazilian researchers for prospective joint projects in their research area.

Luzar said she would like to expand professional development for graduate students in future symposiums and is looking for suggestions on the symposium evaluations. Luzar and Willis agree there will be more time for students to explain their posters at the next symposium.

IFAS outstanding thesis and dissertation awards were also presented at the symposium. The Outstanding Thesis Award entitled “Canine Termite Detection” was presented to Shawn Brooks and the Outstanding Dissertation entitled “ADP-Glucose Pyrophosphorylase Activity From Maize-Potato Mosaics” was awarded to Joanna Cross. Phil Koehler, professor of entomology and nematology, advised Brooks; Curt Hannah, professor of horticultural sciences, advised Cross.

More Than 400 Attend CALS Student Barbecue

The annual CALS Student barbecue shows appreciation to all College of Agricultural and Life Sciences students and recognizes graduating seniors. This year’s barbecue was a tremendous success with more than 450 students and faculty attending.

Departments and student organizations within the college put up displays and booths which allow students convenient access to departments and information about changing their major, adding a minor or joining a student organization.

Albert and Alberta made an appearance. Each graduating senior received a small gift.

The evening’s program included “Pie the Professor” sponsored by Alpha Zeta and a karaoke contest. The winners of the karaoke contest were members of the the CALS Ambassadors. The scoring was very close between all the clubs who participated. The student barbecue also provides a great opportunity for students to meet other students and faculty.
CALS Provides Undergraduate Research Experience

BY KEYATTA SHADE

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) at the University of Florida is offering a new program that allows students to gain research experience. The program, known as the University Scholars Program, is designed to provide students with hands-on experience in research and to help them develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The program is open to selected undergraduate students in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and it is expected to be highly competitive. The program includes a combination of lab work, research projects, and seminars, and it is intended to help students develop the skills they need to succeed in their future careers.

Selected students will work closely with faculty members on research projects that align with their academic interests. They will have the opportunity to contribute to ongoing research and to conduct their own research projects.

Upon completion of the program, students are expected to publish a 2,000-word paper in the Journal of Undergraduate Research. Students must present their results at a symposium and are encouraged to share their findings with the community.

UF faculty on selected research projects. The college is one of 15 that make up the program. Currently, CALS has 19 university scholars and academic mentors participating in research projects during the 2001-2002 academic year.

For the third summer, CALS students have an opportunity to conduct research or participate in an extension program with IFAS faculty. The Experiment Station (the research service of IFAS) and the Cooperative Extension Service have teamed up to provide more than 30 paid summer internships for undergraduate students.

The new minor in environmental horticulture includes courses on plant identification, propagation, and soils. The minor also includes courses on modern precision farming, turfgrass science, and landscape and turfgrass management.

The 20,000-square-foot teaching facility includes an adjacent two-acre teaching garden. The new facility offers state-of-the-art distance education capabilities and has five classrooms, two laboratories, a computer laboratory, a library, greenhouses, and office space for faculty and staff.

On-campus students can expand their academic horizons by participating in the three new minors developed by CALS. The minor in precision agriculture exposes students to the concept of modern precision farming. Classes in geospatial technologies, crop management, turfgrass culture, landscape and turfgrass management, and botany provide a well-rounded education.

CALS continues to offer students new academic opportunities on and off campus. CALS opened a new off-campus academic program in 2001 in partnership with the University of Florida at Hilo in Hawaii. The program includes courses on acid precipitation, tropical agriculture, and environmental sustainability.

New Academic Opportunities Offered

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences continues to offer students new academic opportunities. Students can pursue an interdisciplinary studies major or a minor in precision agriculture, geographic information systems, and crop management. The new minor in environmental horticulture includes courses on soil health, turfgrass science, and landscape and turfgrass management.

Students interested in applying for the program should contact the dean’s office in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.